



# JBS International, Inc.

*A Healthiest Maryland Businesses Success Story*

## Health & Wellness Fair Builds Enthusiasm



JBS employees learning healthful tips at the 2013 health fair.

June 2013 marked the fifth annual JBS Health & Wellness Fair for employees at their North Bethesda headquarters. The purpose of the fair is twofold—to educate employees to be better stewards of their health, while also helping to reduce healthcare costs.

### **Building Excitement**

Getting employees excited about the wellness fair and encouraging participation were two challenges faced

early on. Each year, the planning team creates a theme for the Fair and conducts a series of lead-up events in the preceding month. The purpose of the theme is to generate interaction and promote participation. For example, one year the theme was 'Walking Works.' Seventy-two JBS staff members registered for the walking program. Each participant received a pedometer and logged in their steps for a period of 10 weeks. The

top seven walkers received gift cards. Collectively, participants walked 1,150 miles.

In 2013, the theme was reinforced by a series of health-related lunch and learn sessions. Vendors who participate in the fair are asked to provide interactive events and demonstrations to encourage individual involvement and commitment. Examples include healthy eating demos (with samples!); posture assessments; chair

## JBS International at a Glance:

- **Type of Business:**  
Management and IT services
- **Location:**  
North Bethesda
- **How Long in Business:**  
29 years
- **Number of Employees:**  
354
- **What worked:**  
Hosting a Health & Wellness fair to build interest and excitement for wellness activities; offering health information through web-based conferencing technology to reach staff at other locations





massages; yoga sessions; and health screenings such as vision, blood pressure, and BMI. Employees receive 'reward' incentives for participating in selected activities.

The theming and lead-up events build anticipation and keep each year's fair fresh, interesting and focused on activities that are important to the staff. While popular activities and exhibits are brought back every year, new vendors and displays are sought as well, to provide a range of activities that match with employees' interests.

#### **Multiple Locations: How to include everyone?**

One drawback JBS faced was that because the fair is located in their headquarters office, staff in other offices and those who work remotely were not able to participate. After some consideration, another way was found to offer wellness information to employees at other locations. In 2013, staff voted to select "lunch and learn" presentations on six different health topics from a series called 'Commit to be Fit,' offered by the company's health insurance provider. The informative talks were presented through a web-conferencing service, making them accessible to staff at other locations. This proved to be a popular option that allowed everyone interested to participate.

The fair resulted in the establishment of an employee wellness team (Be Well) in 2011 and the

inclusion of the JBS Green Team, created in 2009, in the health fair planning process to reinforce the corporate commitment to sustainable, 'green' practices in all areas of the business.

In February 2012, JBS was named to the Maryland Green Registry, and was one of five businesses to receive the Maryland Green Registry Leadership Award from Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and Environment Secretary Robert Summers. The award recognizes strong commitment to sustainable practices, measurable results and continual improvement. Since then, the Green Team has supported the Be Well Team and the Health & Wellness Fair, and helped foster a culture that supports healthy lifestyle choices throughout the year.

April Brady, Director of Human Resources at JBS, says

"Employee feedback has been very positive. One of my favorite comments from last year's fair was 'Every year I learn something new that surprises me.' We've also been successful in leveraging our wellness work in cost savings for JBS and employees. While healthcare costs have risen substantially in recent years, we have been able to manage the increases we see. Providers know we are committed to a healthy work environment and supporting our employees' health efforts—and that matters."



**JBS International employees check out health screenings available at their annual Health & Wellness Fair.**